

**Research Article**

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLES AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS WITH MARITAL CONFLICT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The major concepts of marital conflict in the family system is marital conflict. This concept could be related to different variables like attachment style and the level of problem solving skills in couples. Therefore, this study has been occurred to determine the relationship of Attachment style and problem-solving skills of students with parents' marital conflicts. This study was based on descriptive –correlation type. The study population was all parents of elementary school students in Hamadan city and among them 100 couples were selected by multi-stages sampling clusters. For data collection used the questionnaire of marital conflict by Sanaei and Barati (1999), adult attachment style Collins and problem solving Heppner and Peterson (1982). Statistical analysis was performed by using Pearson correlation and stepwise regression in SPSS19 program. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between marital conflict style and attachment styles. There is a significant negative relationship between problem solving and the level of marital conflicts. Regression analysis also showed that attachment styles and problem solving would predict 38% of the total variance of scores on marital conflict. Secure attachment style and ability in problem solving skills are positively associated with reduced marital conflict. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize on these two concepts in pre marriage counseling and couple therapy sessions in order to prevent and reduce marital conflict. In addition, in study of students' behavior these concepts should be considered.

**Keywords:** *A Secure Attachment Style, Problem Solving Skill, Marital Conflict*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Family, despite of appearing minor unit, is the main institutions and major elements of any society. Coordination of school and home has a significant role in achieving the educational goals. If these two important entities are in conflict with each other, neither the practical demands of parents nor school program reaches to their goals. Family problems in a student consist of a range of members with ties to parents and students' position among family members.

Children living in their mental area and this psychological area forms in family and affected by parent. A student who witnessed the battle of his parents in the morning by sensitive mentality is affected in emotional and intellectual perspective that occurred between his parents and so, he could not learn his lesson materials (Asareh, 2000). Among these marital conflict, parents are the strongest predictor of behavioral problems in their children (Teti *et al.*, 1996).

Parents who are experiencing conflict have difficulty on understanding children's state and this misunderstood leading to reduced sensitivity to parental in child behavior (Cummings and Davies, 1996). Conflict arise s when the couple because they are working and joint decision. Varying degrees of

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autonomy and solidarity has been shown that these differences can be classify from mild tension to completely conflicts (Yong and Long, 1998 as quoted by the Mohagheghi, 2011)

Due to this importance, several variables can be found in the context of marital conflict level, such as attachment style.

In the importance of its attachment, it can be said that because the relation among family relationship is deep and multi-layered, and they are connected to each other based on their strong emotional attachment. So, there is a sense of belonging and attachment which forming the roots of the family (Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 2000; as cited in Barvati, 2005). According to adult attachment pattern by Hazan and Shaver (1987) emotional ties, particularly among adults, couples is as continuity emotional ties between the child and parents (Cassidy, 1985) and is based on investigating inner patterns, components, styles and as continuity childhood attachment but with a different developmental level (Shaver and Hazan, 1993).

Adults' features with safety style are in this way that they trust easily to others; they are completely open in terms of excitement and emotion and are bound to close long-term relationships. People with unsafe style have learned in order to have safety feel, they rely heavily on their own, even when such support is necessary for their survival and development, do not request clearly and directly support from the opposite side and people who have the ambivalent are not sure about love and interest of others, they have enough worth for loving and probably supported by others.

This situation leads to vigilance and paranoia with suspicion and fear, repeated outrage, protests and jealous in these people (Johnson and Vifan, translated by Bahrami *et al.*, 2007).

Other variables that could be involved in marital conflict is problem solving skill. In this context, it would be say that the conflict between individual adaptive learning approaches is important when dealing with conflict. Coping with conflict is acquired and can be modified (Arieta and Coa, 2008; Cowan, 2004). If conflict is managed poorly, causing the destruction of life and create strange of emotional and behavioral problems of children who are exposed to parental conflict (Hindman, 2002). One way of coping with life's problems is a problem solving. Problem solving is a way the person can use when deal with the problems of life to problem solving skills associated with personal adjustment (Klynykh, 1999, translated by Mohammad, 2000). Child who is small adult due to the inability to resolve small issues in the future will not be able to resolve their marriage problems and the lack of skill in resolving conflicts between spouses making conflict and unresolved conflicts that have accumulated during the formed relationship. Such a history of unresolved conflict may be reduced negative expectations about future conflicts, resulting in the possibility of solving the conflict couples (Halford, 2001; translated by Tabrizi, 2005).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Method**

The present study was based on descriptive and correlation research method. The study population included all parents of students in third grade in elementary schools in academic year of 2013-2014 in Hamadan. In this study, multistage cluster sampling was used.

### **Instruments**

*Marital Conflict Questionnaire (Sanaei and Barati, 1999):* It consists of 42 questions, seven of marital conflict which are decreased coordination, decreased sexual relationship, increasing emotional reactions, increased support for child, increase a person's relationship with their relatives, loss of family relationship with his wife family and friends, separated finances from each other. Cronbach alpha for the whole questionnaire is 0.53 and reported for subscale reduction Partnership 0.30, decreased sexuality 0.50, increasing emotional reactions 0.73, increasing support of children 0.60, increasing the relationship between the individual and their relatives 0.64, decreasing family relationship with relatives wife and friend 0.64 and separate finances 0.51 (Sanaei, 1989).

*Inventory of Adult Attachment Questionnaire:* Scale for the assessment of adult attachment investigated by communication skills and intimate relationship style. The test retest reliability coefficient is reported for each scale dependence and anxiety were close to 0.68, 0.71 and 0.52.

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Collins and Read showed that the subscales of proximity, dependence and anxiety remained stable between 2 months and even eight months since alpha values in all cases is equal or more than 0.80. The rate of trust has high reliability.

*Problem Solving Index (PSI)*: Problem solving questionnaire has been developed by Heppner and Petersen (1982) to measure respondents' perceptions of their problem-solving behavior.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

Multivariate regression analysis was used to predict marital conflict on the basis of attachment styles and problem-solving skills. As the meaningful level is lower than 0.05, the created regression model is meaningful statistically. Also, according to the value of R<sup>2</sup>, attachment style and problem-solving skills explain 0.38 of the total variance marital conflict and unexplained amount equals to 0.62.

In other words, 0.38 of the changes resulting from marital conflict leading from attachment style and problem solving skills, and 0.62 changes caused by other factors. In order to investigate the extent and the impact of each of the variables between the pre mentioned on marital conflict, the beta coefficients were calculated from the results of this study which have been shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Beta coefficients in order to determinethe extentand direction of theimpact ofpredicted variables onmarital conflict**

predictive variable level	B	SE	Beta	T	P value
Constant	76.54	17.05		4.49	0.001
Anxiety	1.78	0.39	0.34	4.54	0.001
Proximity	1.24	0.48	0.19	2.58	0.011
Self Control	-0.73	0.37	-0.16	1.98	0.049
Dependence	-0.54	0.45	-0.08	1.21	0.228
Orientation- Avoid	-0.36	0.23	-0.13	1.56	0.12
Trust toProblem solving	0.1	0.26	0.03	0.37	0.71

As seen in Table 1, according to the couples' anxiety, Beta has had the greatest impact on their marital conflict. This variable has positive and significant effect on marital conflict which is 0.34 (Beta =0.34) and (p<0.05), which shows that with each unit increase in individuals' anxiety, as well as their marital conflict will rise 0.34 unit.

After anxiety, nearby has had the greatest impact on marital conflict. This variable has positive and significant effect on 0.19 marital conflicts. Against Beta, anxiety and proximity have negative effect on marital conflict. Regarding Beta value, self-control has negative and meaningful effect on marital conflict (Beta= -0.16) and (p<0.05), which shows that with each unit increase in self-control, marital conflict decreased 0.16 unit.

According to the above table, the effect of dependency, orientation-avoid reliance on problem solving on marital conflict is not significant. Because meaningful level in t is higher than 0.05 (p>0.05).

**Discussion**

Result of analysis indicated significant differences in rates of marital conflict on attachment style. Levels of marital conflict in ambivalent attachment styles are significantly higher than secure and insecure attachment. But the amount of marital conflict on avoidant and secure attachment style was not different significantly.

Couple conflict is influenced by attachment style, about secure people their secure long-term relationships are stable and satisfaction.

This satisfaction through promoting open and honest expression of feelings and emotions high level of disclosure and facilitate mutual dialogue and negotiations during the conflict that these factors could reduce the conflict or resolve their ambivalence toward their wives vigilant and alert and suspicious of

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emotional satisfaction to have a very low failure and are experiencing great emotional turmoil. The findings of Finney (2003) and distressed couples have a very low performance and fighting over power and emotion and emotional turmoil.

In the case of avoidance people, although subjects in the study have low-level conflict cause can be sustain and long interval between the individual and others in avoiding in these people, however, conflict isn't occur, but it remains latent. On the other hand, avoidance couples breaking up and rejecting their husband, while strengthens self-image (Johnson Vyfn translated by Bahrami *et al.*, 2007). There is meaningful relation between problem solving and conflict marital and all its subscales. This correlation is negative and average that shows how problem solving is higher, marital conflict and all its subscales are lesser. The results are consistent with the findings of Shafie-Nia (2001), Nazari (2003), Dybayyan (2004), Sudan (2004), Ghalili *et al.*, (2004), Sudan (2005), Ghamari (2008), Hosseini-Nasab *et al.*, (2008) and ShafiAbadi *et al.*, (2009) and Guttman (1994 and 1996, quoting Qaderi *et al.*, 2008) and MobasherAmini, *et al.*, (2010), Zimmerman (1996), Vrtzl (1997), Sygram (1997) Mud (2000), Nelson (2001), Zimmerman (1996), Johnson *et al.*, (2005).

The rate of problem solving based on attachment style did not have meaningful difference. But the couples' confidence in solving problems by means of attachment style was meaningful.

Confidence in problem solving in couples with secure attachment style was significantly higher than the couple who had anxious attachment style. The reason of this matter can be compared to the Characteristics of those in secure people that secure people had the right amount of confidence and positive motions in friendship

And comprehend others as trustworthy people. But the amount of trends-and how to avoid personal control in couples based on the attachment style didn't have significant difference. The result was counter to the research hypothesis of Finney and Naler (1995, as cited in Atari *et al.*,) and Sympon *et al.*, (1992) have shown people with in secure attachment styles and marital functioning, poor communication and poor problem solving, flexibility and low trust in situations of distress and seeking support and had poor performance. However, most individuals in this sample (0.99) had more than moderate problem solving. So in this instance, avoidant and ambivalent people have learned to solve the problem. Attachment style and problem solving kills explained 38% percent of total variance in marital conflict. This result is in line with Besharat paper (2000), Besharat *et al.*, (2000), Besharat *et al.*, (2001), Rajai *et al.*, (2004), Ahadi, *et al.*, (2004), Ghalili *et al.*, (2004), Hosseinian and Shafiee (2004)), Bahrami and Saeedi (2005), Karami (1386), Ghamari (1388) and Hosseini-Nasab *et al.*, (2008) Shafiabadi *et al.*, (2009), MobasherAmini *et al.*, (2010) in Iran and Fybs, (1992), Finney (1994, as cited in Finney, 1999), Finney and Nalr (1995, as cited in Atari *et al.*), Guttman (1994, 1996, as cited in Qaderi *et al.*, (1996), Banz (2004), Chris and Anyvs (2001), Karnly *et al.*, (1994), Symson (1997), Zimmerman (1996), Sygram (1997), Vrtzl (1997), Mud (2000), Nelson(2001), Finney (2003) and Jansonetal (2005).

The current study was done in Hamadan, so the results cannot be generalized to the target population larger than the entire extended community. Other limitations of the study were using questionnaires that can react participants and limit the results.

The studies suggest other research on the relationship between marital conflict with other variables such as occupation, social class income and social class among students' parents.

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